

Alcohol, Drugs and Driving. Volume 11 in Modern Problems of Pharmacopsychiatry. Edited by M. Mattila. 101 pp. Illust. S. Karger, AG, Basel, 1976. \$19. ISBN 3-8055-2349-1

This book contains the proceedings of a satellite symposium held in conjunction with the 6th International Congress of Pharmacology on Alcohol, Drugs and Driving, convened in Helsinki in July 1975.

Eleven papers cover a wide range of topics within the general area of drugs and driving — five papers on the relationship of alcohol and drugs to various aspects of motor performance, three on the methods of measuring alcohol and drug concentrations in the body, two on the driving characteristics of outpatients and one on law-enforcement procedures. The contents are not organized by topic, which detracts from the continuity of the material. Some attempt has been made to synthesize these diverse elements by means of the opening and closing remarks at the symposium, but integration is difficult because some of the articles are theoretically oriented, confronting general issues, whereas others present the results of specific experiments. This unevenness in the contents will create difficulties for the reader uninitiated in the field.

While the article by Borkenstein on the efficacy of law-enforcement procedures concerning impaired driving and the paper by Perrine on the relation between epidemiologic and experimental research contain provocative ideas and data for novices and experienced researchers, the remainder of the papers are written more in the style of journal articles, with little background material. Accordingly, these papers, which constitute the greater part of the book, will be of interest primarily to specialists in the field.

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Basic Psychiatry for the Primary Care Physician. Edited by Harry S. Abram. 291 pp. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1976. \$12.50. ISBN 0-316-00465-0

Professor Abram has contributed a great deal to our understanding of the emotional and psychiatric reactions of patients undergoing long-term renal dialysis, renal transplantation and closed- and open-heart surgery. This soft-cover book deals with a spectrum of topics ranging from the traditional psychiatric syndromes (delirium and dementia) to such common problems as symptoms of sleep and sexual disorders that are frequently voiced in physicians' offices.

In the introductory chapter Professors Abram and Meador set the tone for the book by discussing that special triangular relationship between the patient, the physician and the psychiatrist. The chapter is lucidly written and merits the close individual attention of physicians and specialists alike, for it highlights the common problems of communication in this complex relationship. If the patient often presents his problem in "shielded language", the physician is equally hampered by his or her "belief systems" and "apostolic functions". These are clearly presented with illustrative examples.

I wonder if Hollender's contribution on psychiatric disorders was necessary considering the expanded psychiatric curriculum in undergraduate years in most medical schools, even though it is a good overview of the subject. Wells' otherwise comprehensive review on delirium and dementia is marred only by his suggested chemotherapeutic management of the former. He states that these conditions are best treated by the administration of minor tranquilizers. While this is true of certain deliria caused by specific agents (for example alcohol withdrawal), the mainstay of chemotherapeutic management is the use of major tranquilizers such as haloperidol or perphenazine. It is

unfortunate that many elderly patients who have unidentified or minimal organic brain syndrome continue to receive minor tranquilizers that often worsen their condition.

The chapter on adolescent patients should do much to help physicians create an effective relationship with patients of this age group. Similarly, the chapters on sleep and sexual disorders are easy to read and contain much information and a useful table of agents that decrease sexual response.

The chapters on the dying patient and the patient with myocardial infarction are full of data on the psychologic and psychosocial variables that so profoundly affect the coping mechanisms of patients under these stresses and is worth reading by not only primary-care physicians but also specialists, in whose domain these patients frequently languish.

Unfortunately the chapter on the psychotherapeutic interview is too vague and too general to be applied immediately by most physicians, and the one on psychopharmacology is a rather simple review for physicians who graduated from medical school before the era of psychotropic drugs. An interesting addition to the book is the inclusion of a self-evaluation quiz based on the material presented in the volume.

The book should appeal to family physicians, physicians staffing emergency centres in general hospitals, and interns and residents in internal medicine and psychiatry early in their training. Notwithstanding my criticisms, the book achieves one of the objectives mentioned by Professor Maurice J. Martin who, in the foreword, states: "Attention to the medical aspects of illness only will no longer suffice." In spite of several contributors the book maintains a cohesiveness that attests to the editorial expertise of Professor Abram.

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